

NOAA Coral Reef Conservation Program MPA Management Assessment Checklist

Evaluating the current status of marine protected area (MPA) implementation and management can lead to improved MPA effectiveness and performance. Strengthening MPA management to conserve coral reef resources remains a pillar of NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program (CRCP) efforts both domestically and internationally (<http://coralreef.noaa.gov/about/crcp/strategy/currentgoals/>). With its focus on conservation of coral reefs and the human communities that depend upon them, a priority goal of the CRCP is to support effective implementation and management of marine protected areas (MPAs) and ecological networks of MPAs that protect key coral reef ecosystem components and functions. This MPA Management Assessment Checklist was developed as a simple tool to assess the management of MPAs in priority coral reef sites in U.S. jurisdictions and internationally, areas important to the CRCP and jurisdictional partners. This checklist will allow the CRCP to better understand the needs of its partners in the MPA management community and help managers build and/or maintain the management capacity necessary for successful implementation of their MPA management goals and objectives.

The information gathered for the MPAs, collected through interviews with site managers, will provide insight into management strengths and needs. With this information, the CRCP can make more informed decisions about where to strategically invest limited resources to address priority MPA management capacity gaps. Additionally this will provide a transparent process to the resource managers responsible for MPA management. Managers will then have the information needed to request funding, technical support, and other forms of assistance through targeted proposals to the CRCP and other funders, thereby increasing the capacity of partners in the management community to effectively conserve their coral reef resources.

This tool will also be used to track the performance of the CRCP at addressing the management needs identified using the checklist. Through initial assessments and periodic re-evaluations, the CRCP will track incremental progress made at MPA sites and identify new or emerging issues that may impede management success. The CRCP will compile and report on this progress through a NOAA performance measure - therefore, the performance of the CRCP will be tied to the overall management effectiveness of the MPAs that it strives to support.

The checklist includes fourteen assessment areas that are key components of a successful MPA management program: management planning, ecological network development, governance, on-site management, enforcement, boundaries, biophysical monitoring, socioeconomic monitoring, MPA effectiveness evaluation and adaptive management, stakeholder engagement, financing, outreach and education, conflict resolution mechanisms, and planning for resilience to climate change.



Assessment Criteria

In order to be eligible for assessment an MPA site needs to:

- Be located in one of the priority geographic areas as identified by the CRCP (Domestic priorities include: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, Hawaii, Flower Garden Banks, Florida (Martin County to the Dry Tortugas), Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. International priorities include jurisdictions located in the follow four regions: the Wider Caribbean, Micronesia, Samoa and the Southwest Pacific, and the Coral Triangle.)
- Be a legally established MPA recognized by appropriate government authority or under equivalent customary tenure or other form of community-based protection status
- Have some ongoing management activity

Three tiers of management activity are defined and presented under each assessment area. The NOAA CRCP seeks to apply this assessment tool to eligible MPA sites in priority geographic areas and to improve management capacity by providing funding and technical assistance to help MPA managers progress from tier one activity towards tier two and tier three management activity in each of these fourteen assessment areas.

MPA Name and Location:

Total Area of MPA:

Site Manager:

Person(s) Interviewed (if different from or in addition to site manager) :

Contact Email(s):

Date:

Interview Type (circle one): Initial assessment or Re-evaluation



MPA Management Assessment Area 1: Management Planning

- Tier 1** ☐ Some management activity being implemented, but no management plan in place
- Tier 2** ☐ Some management activity being implemented and management plan developed
- Tier 3** ☐ Approved management plan that is being implemented

Site Specific Comments and Information on Management Planning:

MPA Management Assessment Area 2: Ecological Network Development

- Tier 1** ☐ Site is either not associated with a network or is part of an ecological MPA network but is not designed to support network goals and management is not coordinated across the network
- Tier 2** ☐ Site is part of an ecological MPA network and site is designed to support the goals of an ecological network but management is not coordinated across the network
- Tier 3** ☐ Site is part of an ecological MPA network, site is designed to support the goals of an ecological network and site management coordinated with other sites across the ecological network

Site Specific Comments and Information on Ecological Network Development:

MPA Management Assessment Area 3: Governance

- Tier 1** ☐ Site has been legally established or is under equivalent customary tenure or other form of community-based protection status, but there are few or no official or community based rules and regulations in place supporting the MPA and its management plan
- Tier 2** ☐ Laws or customary instruments for the establishment of the MPA are in place, and official or community based rules or regulations governing some specific activities within the MPA are also in place
- Tier 3** ☐ Clearly defined laws or customary instruments and official or community based rules and regulations governing all specific activities included in the objectives of the site management plan are in place

Site Specific Comments and Information on Governance:

MPA Management Assessment Area 4: On-Site Management

- Tier 1** ☐ No management personnel assigned to site and/or little or no formalized community oversight
- Tier 2** ☐ Some management personnel assigned to site or some formalized community oversight
- Tier 3** ☐ Full-time site manager and programmatic personnel assigned to site or local community based management leader in place that has been formally designated and accepted and is able to dedicate sufficient time to the management of the site

Site Specific Comments and Information on On-Site Management:

MPA Management Assessment Area 5: Enforcement

- Tier 1** ☐ Few or no established rules and regulations exist or there is little or no enforcement of existing rules and regulations
- Tier 2** ☐ Inconsistent enforcement of rules and regulations
- Tier 3** ☐ Active and consistent enforcement of rules and regulations

Site Specific Comments and Information on Enforcement:

MPA Management Assessment Area 6: Boundaries

- Tier 1** ☐ Lack of clearly defined boundaries and/or zones
- Tier 2** ☐ Clearly defined boundaries and/or zones
- Tier 3** ☐ Clearly defined boundaries and zones and information on boundary locations and permitted activities in various zones (if applicable) provided to public and MPA stakeholders

Site Specific Comments and Information on Boundaries:

MPA Management Assessment Area 7: Biophysical Monitoring

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no existing biophysical monitoring activity
- Tier 2** ☐ Existing biophysical monitoring program
- Tier 3** ☐ Data produced from biophysical monitoring program being evaluated and used to inform management decisions

Site Specific Comments and Information on Biophysical Monitoring:

MPA Management Assessment Area 8: Socioeconomic Monitoring

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no existing socioeconomic monitoring activity
- Tier 2** ☐ Existing socioeconomic monitoring program
- Tier 3** ☐ Data produced from socioeconomic monitoring program being evaluated and used to inform management decisions

Site Specific Comments and Information on Socioeconomic Monitoring:

MPA Management Assessment Area 9: MPA Effectiveness Evaluation and Adaptive Management

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no evaluation of MPA effectiveness
- Tier 2** ☐ MPA effectiveness evaluated but no ongoing effectiveness monitoring and evaluation program in place
- Tier 3** ☐ MPA effectiveness evaluated and effectiveness monitoring and evaluation program in place with findings being applied to adapt management strategies

Site Specific Comments and Information on MPA Effectiveness Evaluation and Adaptive Management:

MPA Management Assessment Area 10: Stakeholder Engagement

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no community and stakeholder engagement in management planning
- Tier 2** ☐ Community and stakeholder engagement in management planning
- Tier 3** ☐ Community and stakeholder engagement in management planning and implementation of site management efforts

Site Specific Comments and Information on Stakeholder Engagement:

MPA Management Assessment Area 11: Financing

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no reliable source of funding identified to support management activities
- Tier 2** ☐ Existing funding for management activities
- Tier 3** ☐ Sustainable finance plan being implemented that provides long term sustainable funding mechanisms

Site Specific Comments and Information on Financing:

MPA Management Assessment Area 12: Outreach and Education

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no ongoing outreach and education activities exist
- Tier 2** ☐ Ongoing outreach and education activities in support of the MPA
- Tier 3** ☐ Existence of an outreach and education program with various activities and strategies focused on the MPA that helps achieve the MPA's goals and objectives

Site Specific Comments and Information on Outreach and Education:

MPA Management Assessment Area 13: Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no existing mechanism to resolve conflict with MPA stakeholders
- Tier 2** ☐ Mechanism for conflict resolution with MPA stakeholders is available but is not being used and stakeholders are not aware of this mechanism
- Tier 3** ☐ Mechanism for conflict resolution is available and MPA stakeholders are aware of and use this mechanism

Site Specific Comments and Information on Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:

MPA Management Assessment Area 14: Planning for Resilience to Climate Change

- Tier 1** ☐ Little or no consideration of climate change resilience in the management of the MPA.
- Tier 2** ☐ Management includes actions intended to increase the resilience of coral reef resources to the effects of climate change
- Tier 3** ☐ Site is designed to increase resilience of coral reef resources to the effects of climate change and management includes actions necessary to avoid or minimize impacts and spread the risk due to climate change

Site Specific Comments and Information on Resilience to Climate Change:

MPA Management Assessment Score Card

(check tier that applies to each assessment area)

Assessment Area	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1. Management Planning			
2. Ecological Network Development			
3. Governance			
4. On-site management			
5. Enforcement			
6. Boundaries			
7. Biophysical monitoring			
8. Socioeconomic monitoring			
9. MPA Effectiveness evaluation			
10. Stakeholder engagement			
11. Financing			
12. Outreach and Education			
13. Conflict Resolution Mechanism			
14. Resilience to Climate Change			